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RECOMMENDATION

BY THE
Commission of the General Assembly,

FOR A
Voluntary Contribution

FOR
The Society in Scotland for propagating Christian
Knowledge.



At Edinburgh, 14th November 1722.
THE which Day, Doctor Alexander Dundas, His Majesty's Physician, Preses of the Committee of the Society in Scotland for propagating Christian Knowledge, presented to the Commission of the General Assembly, a Representation; the Tenor whereof follows: Unto the very Reverend, the Moderator, and other Reverend and Honourable Members of the Commission of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, the Committee of the Society in Scotland for propagating Christian Knowledge, by Appointment of the said Society, humbly sheweth, That the Members of the said Society, ever since their Erection in 1709, have with the utmost Diligence and Faithfulness managed the Society's Fund, which, by the Blessing of GOD, and Bounty of pious and charitable People, is increased to the Sum of Eight thousand Four hundred and Forty eight Pounds Sterling, beside Walter Stuart of Pardavin his Mortification of Twenty thousand Merks Scots, which is liferented by his Lady, and the Stock is made absolutely secure, by her Care, to the Society. The good Providence of GOD hath so remarkably appeared in this, That altho' their Stock is in many different Hands, yet their Losses hitherto have been but very inconsiderable. Many moving Representations, from all Corners of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, of the gross Ignorance of great Numbers of poor People, have been laid before the Society; which have so stirred up their Sympathy and Compassion, that they have exceeded their Ability in erecting Schools for their Instruction; and have now Fifty nine Schools settled in such Places as the Society judged wanted them most. By the last Reports of Presbyteries to the Society, there are no less than 1444 Boys, and 568 Girles, in all 2012, at the said Schools, learning to read, write, and also Arithmetick, and to sing the common Tunes, and to understand the Principles of the reformed Religion. Altho', in the Beginning, Parents seemed averse from sending their Children to learn, yet now they strive who shall have their Children best taught: And even Servants, both Male and Female, leave their Services,

ces, for a Time, to have the Benefit of Instruction at the Society's Schools. Yea, Popish Parents have petitioned the Society, for the Benefit of these Schools to their Children; and bound themselves, by a written Obligation, to send their Children thereto, under a Penalty; and the Society very readily complied with their Desire: So that now many Children of Popish Parents both learn our Catechism, and read other Protestant Books, and come to Church. And tho' Popish Priests, and other Zealots, not only threatened those Papists who sent their Children to the Society's Schools, but exerted themselves to the utmost, to defeat the Society's pious Design, by spreading Lies, and groundless Falshoods, as if those bred at the Society's Schools were designed for the Plantations; and that some, at the Beginning, did give Ear to these Falshoods; yet they are now satisfied to the contrary. There seems now, in most Places, an earnest Desire after Christian Knowledge; so that the Society's Schools are not half sufficient to instruct the different Places in the Highlands and Islands: For, His Majesty, in Pursuance of an Act of Parliament, having, in the Year 1716, appointed a Commission to enquire into the State of the Highlands, it was made evident to them, by Reports from Presbyteries, and Descriptions of the Countries, that above 200 Places wanted Charity Schools; but the Number was so great, that the Commission limited it, in their Report which they sent up to His Majesty's Secretaries of State, that it might be the more easily granted, and condescended only upon 152 Places in the Highlands and Islands, where Schools were absolutely necessary, in order to remove Ignorance and Barbarity: And many earnest Applications have since been made, from these Places, to the Society, for Schools; but they are concerned, that their Fund is not sufficient to erect more Schools, and furnish them with Books, and other necessary Helps, for Instruction. And because the Society's larger Schools could not be calculated for the Accommodation of Glens, and remote Corners of Parishes, where there were but a small Number of Families, the Society, for the supplying of these Places, thought it convenient to allow to such as had the *Irish* Language, one Penny per Day when at School, and also one Penny for the Lord's Day, when they came to School throughout the Week; but this Encouragement was given only to such who upon Examination were found to have more than ordinary Capacity. And, over and above this, if they came punctually to School for Two Years, they were to have one Suit of Clothes, and a Pair of Shoes: And, for their further Encouragement, if they inclined to stay a third Year, and assist the Schoolmaster, they were to have Three Half-pence for every Day's Attendance, and one Suit of Clothes and a Pair of Shoes at the End of that 3^d Year: And if such, upon Trial by Presbyteries, were found sufficiently qualified, they were to be preferred to be Schoolmasters of the Society's smaller Schools; and some of these are now qualified to teach others. But the Society's Fund is not sufficient to encourage these poor Scholars, unless they sink some of their Schools; and therefore must of Necessity retrench the Number of these poor Scholars, unless they are enabled by the Charity of well disposed Persons, to continue them. The Society have settled Schools in remote Islands and Corners of large Parishes, especially where Ministers have two or more Churches; and in the Minister's Absence, by his Direction, the Schoolmasters, on the



the Lord's Day, read the Holy Scriptures, and other good Books, Sing, Pray, and Catechise the poor People, who willingly attend: And this Method, has, by the Blessing of God, proved very edifying and instructing. Much more might be said upon these Heads, of the Usefulness and Advantage of the Society's Schools, and the great Proficiency in Knowledge made by the Schollars; but it not being proper to insist on this, they refer to a second Impression of a Book published in 1720, by the Society, wherein is a more particular Account of the Rise, Constitution and Management of the said Society, which is to be had at most Booksellers Shops in *Edinburgh*; and all Contributors are allowed, for their Satisfaction, to see the Society's Records and Accounts, and how their Funds are managed: And special Care is taken of recording the Names and Designations of Contributors: And as never a more excellent Occasion could offer for Persons honouring the Lord with their Substance, so many have, in this Matter, given Proof of their truly Christian Charity; and some have left large Donations, of whose Names honourable Mention is, and will be made by the Society, on all proper Occasions. The Society, in the Year 1715, having petitioned the venerable Assembly to recommend a voluntary Contribution throughout *Scotland*, to be employed in buying Books, and maintaining itinerant Schools, in remote Glens and Islands, where Popery and Ignorance most abounds; the General Assembly did cheerfully, and unanimously, comply with the Desire of their Petition, and a considerable Sum was collected, which was carefully and frugally bestowed, according to the Purposes of the Act of Assembly: For, with the foresaid Collection, and a Part of their own Revenue, the Society have maintained several itinerant Schools, which have proved of very great Use; and bought and given away to their poor Scholars, and others, the following Books, *viz.* 3355 Bibles, 1165 New Testaments, 175 Confessions of Faith, with the Scriptures at large, 1538 of a smaller Size, without the Scriptures, 1581 *Vincent's* Catechisms, 1427 Copies of *Guthrie's* Trial of a saving Interest in Christ, 598 Dozens and an half of Proverbs, 973 Dozen of shorter Catechisms, 93 Dozens and 2 of Syllabing Catechisms, 336 Copies of *Pool's* Dialogues, 52 Reams and 10 Quires of writing Paper, 636 Arithmetick Books, 237 Copies of the Funeral of the Mass, 402 Copies of the Danger of Popery, 616 Copies of the Protestant's Resolution why he will not be a Papist, 170 *English* Grammars, 365 Copy Books, 155 Musick Books, and many other Books; and besides the buying of these Books, and maintaining the Fifty nine Schools above-mentioned, the Society lodged Money with Ministers for encouraging smaller Schools in their Parishes: So that now this very useful Collection is fully exhausted, and much more; and and the Society will not be in a Condition, both to maintain their own Schools, their poor Scholars, and buy Books, unless the very Reverend Commission (who are sufficiently empowered by the late venerable Assembly, before whom the Society humbly lay this their Case) will be pleas'd to recommend a voluntary Collection, throughout all the Parishes in *Scotland*, upon such Days, and in such a Manner, as shall seem most expedient to them for the Advancement of this pious and noble Undertaking, of buying and distributing more Books to the Society's Scholars, and other poor Persons, who have not wherewith to buy them, and yet are very desirous to read and understand them, and settling
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and maintaining more small Schools; And to appoint the Money to be given, for the encouraging this charitable and very useful Undertaking, to be sent timously to Mr. *George Watson* the Society's Treasurer, to be disposed of, for the Uses abovementioned, as the Society shall think fit. Signed, in Name and at Appointment of the said Committee, by ALEX. DUNDAS, P. C. The Commission of the General Assembly having heard and considered the above-written Representation, they unanimously did, and hereby do grant the Desire thereof; and do most earnestly recommend a publick voluntary Collection, throughout all the Parishes in *Scotland*, for the Ends above-mentioned, to be gathered upon such Days, and in such a Manner, as the several Presbyteries shall judge most likely to advance the Design: And appoints the several Presbyteries to set about the said Collection in their respective Bounds, with all Diligence: The Presbyteries befouth *Tay*, betwixt and the first Day of *May* next; and these benorth *Tay*, betwixt and the first Day of *August* next to come: And that all the said Presbyteries send in their Collections, against the said respective Days, to Mr. *George Watson* the Society's Treasurer, to be disposed of, for the Purposes above-mentioned, as the said Society shall direct. And the Commission does most earnestly exhort and beseech all charitable and well disposed Persons, to give chearfully and liberally, according to their Ability, toward this so good and pious a Work: And the Commission appoints each Minister to read these Presents from his Pulpit, the Lord's Day immediately before he set about the said Collection, and, after reading thereof, to give suitable Exhortations to the People; and where Congregations are vacant, the Presbyteries are desired to appoint a Minister to preach there, and intimate the fore-said Collection, and join with the Elders in overseeing the same.

Extracted by JO. DUNDAS Cls. Eccl. Scot.

